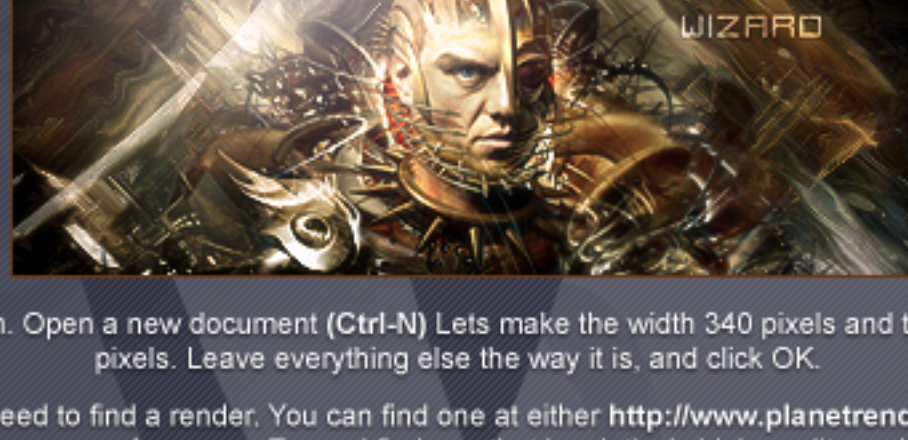


wizard's tutorial

Welcome to my latest Photoshop tutorial. I've made 2 or 3 before but that was a while ago. I'm going to try and make this extremely easy so that anyone can follow it and hopefully people can learn a lot from it. This tutorial is designed for people that are relatively new to Photoshop but everyone is welcome to read it. I'm sure everyone can learn something from it.

You are going to be making this:

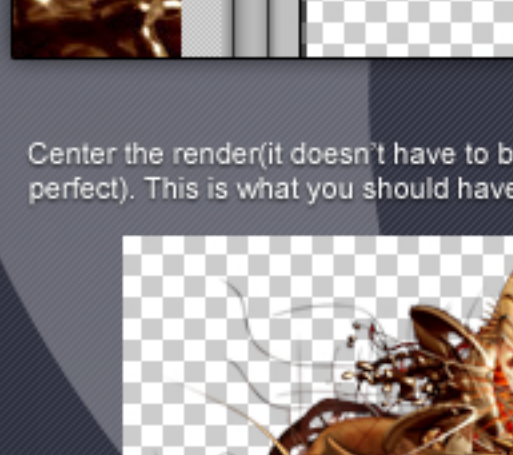


Ok let's begin. Open a new document (**Ctrl-N**) Lets make the width 340 pixels and the height 125 pixels. Leave everything else the way it is, and click OK.

Now we need to find a render. You can find one at either <http://www.planetrenders.net> or <http://www.gamereaders.com>. Try and find one that is relatively high-quality and one you can easily center. Try to get something with some decent colors. I used this one(resized to fit on here) from Planetrenders:



Take your render and save it to a folder that you will remember. Open (**Ctrl-O**) it in Photoshop and use the **Move Tool (Shift-V)** and drag the render to your document that you just made.

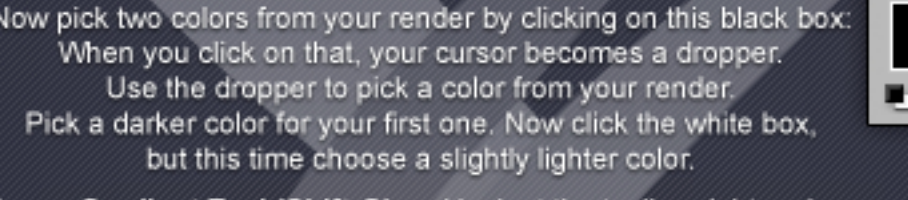


Way too huge right? No problem, press **Ctrl-T** and a box will appear around the render. Drag the box over to the side (by clicking anywhere inside the box) until you see a corner of the box.



Hold down **Shift** (this keeps it proportional) and drag inward to make the render smaller. Do this as much as u need to fit the render on the document. Click on the inside of the box and drag to position the render, and double click when you think its at a good size.

Center the render(it doesn't have to be perfect). This is what you should have:



Now pick two colors from your render by clicking on this black box:



When you click on that, your cursor becomes a dropper.

Use the dropper to pick a color from your render.

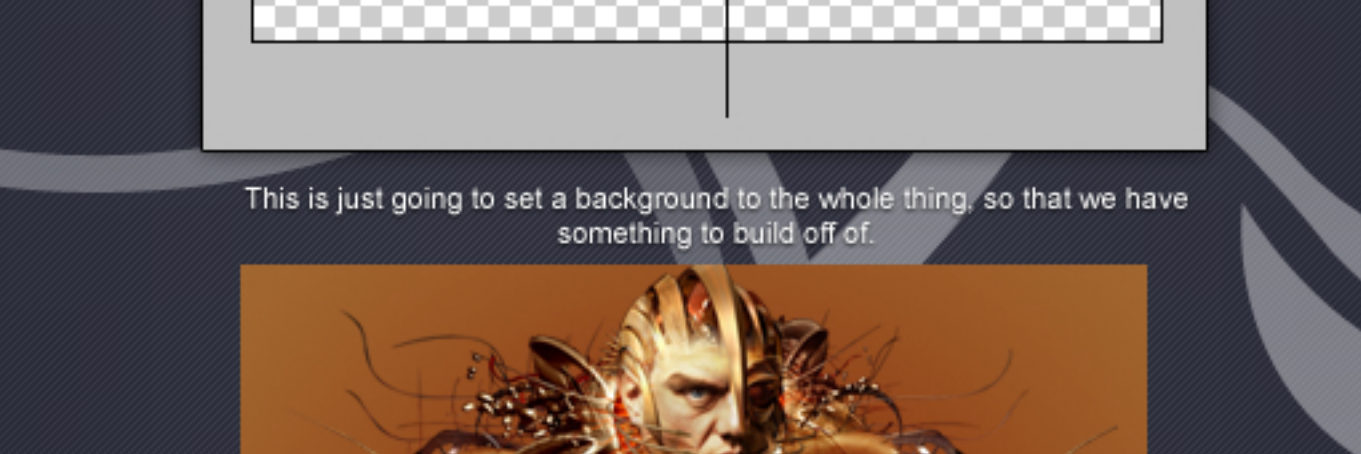
Pick a darker color for your first one. Now click the white box, but this time choose a slightly lighter color.



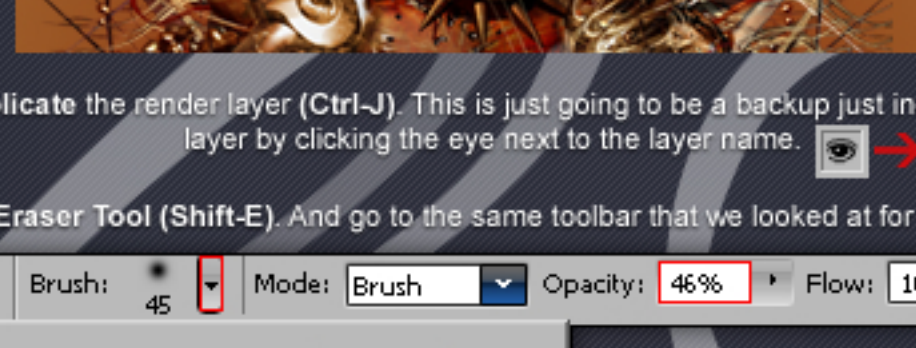
Now select your **Gradient Tool (Shift-G)** and look at the toolbar right underneath the File/Edit/Image toolbar. Click this:



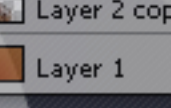
Now maximize the screen of your document. There should be a blank layer under your render layer. If not, make one (**Shift-Ctrl-N**). Make sure the layer is under the render, and make sure that it is highlighted. Now with the **Gradient Tool**, hold **Shift** and drag a line upward like this:



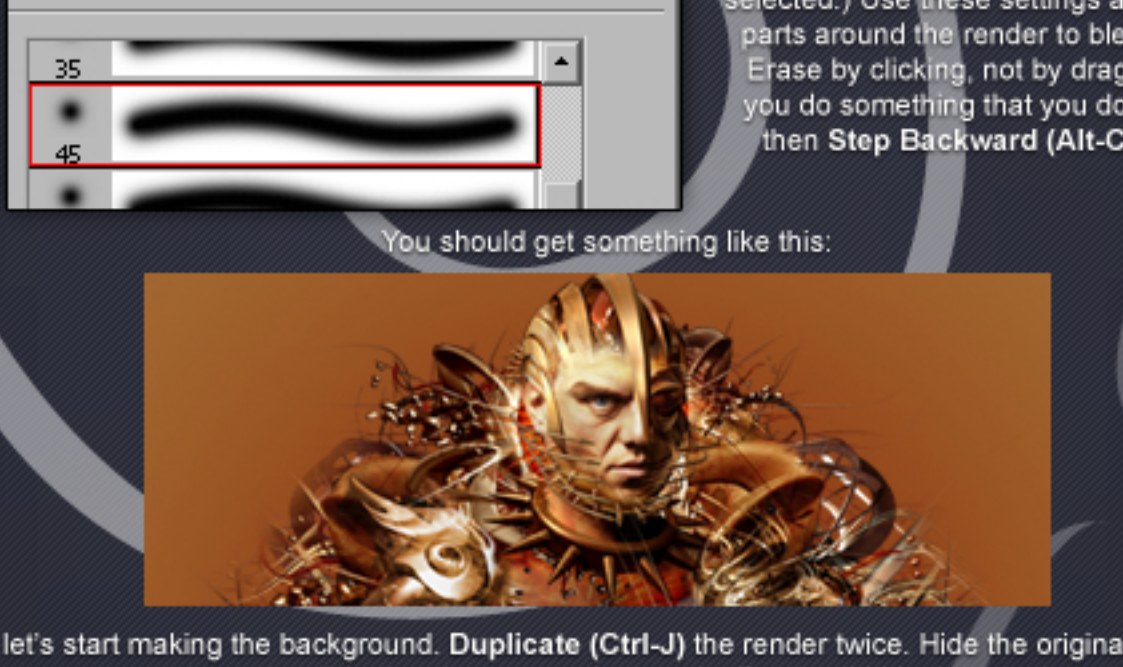
This is just going to set a background to the whole thing, so that we have something to build off of.



Now **Duplicate** the render layer (**Ctrl-J**). This is just going to be a backup just incase. Hide this layer by clicking the eye next to the layer name.

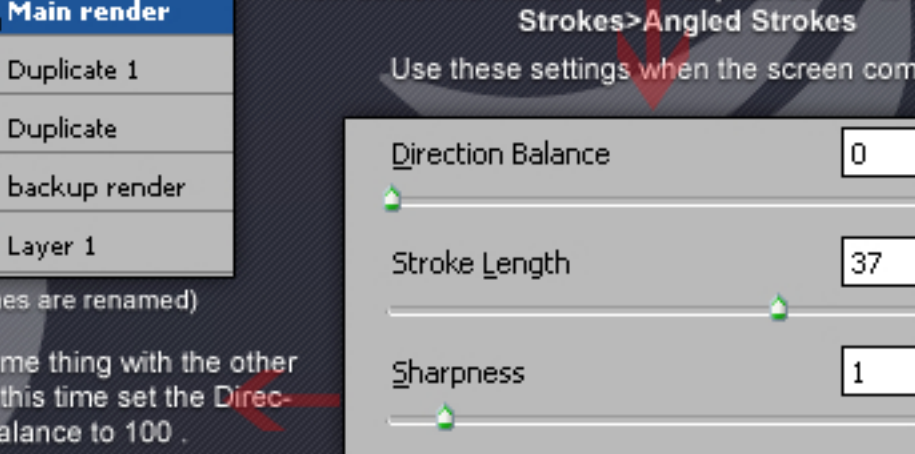


Now take out the **Eraser Tool (Shift-E)**. And go to the same toolbar that we looked at for the Gradient Tool.

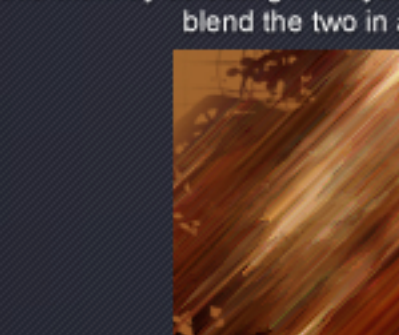


(Make sure your visible render layer is selected.) Use these settings and erase parts around the render to blend it in. Erase by clicking, not by dragging. If you do something that you don't like, then **Step Backward (Alt-Ctrl-Z)**.

You should get something like this:



Ok, let's start making the background. **Duplicate (Ctrl-J)** the render twice. Hide the original render, because we are going to be distorting the two you just made. Put the (hidden) original render on top.



(layer names are renamed)

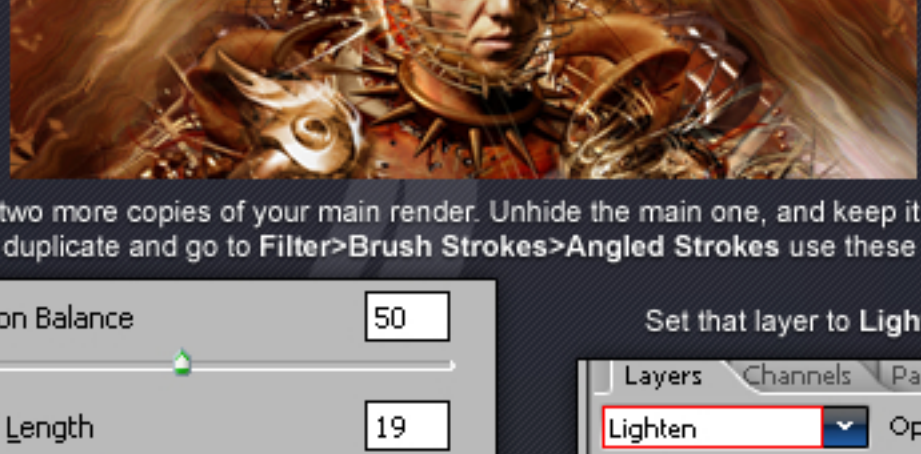
Now do the same thing with the other duplicate, but this time set the **Direction Balance** to 100.

Now select the first of the two duplicates. Go to **Filter>Brush Strokes>Angled Strokes**

Use these settings when the screen comes up:



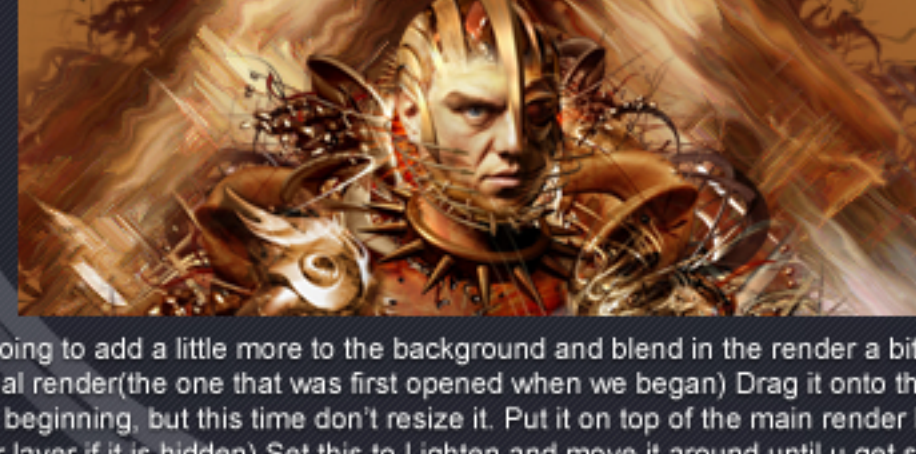
Set them both to a different side of the document depending on what you want it to look like. You can move them by selecting the layer and using the **Move Tool (Shift-V)**. Erase some of the overlap to blend the two in a little better. You should have something like this:



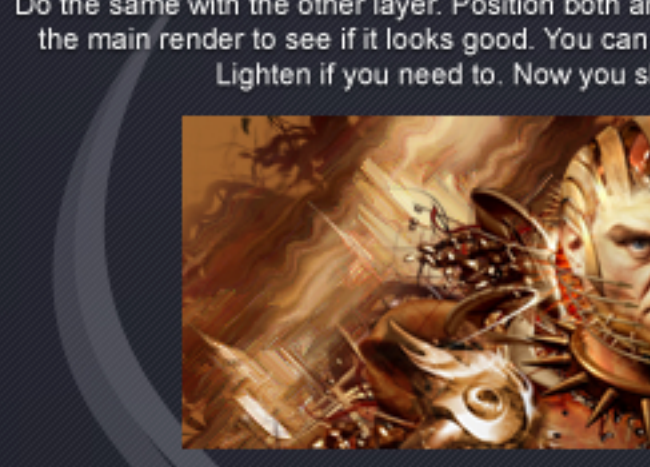
Ok, now select the first duplicate again. Go to **Filter>Distort>Ripple**

Set the size to Medium and the amount to +100. Now do the same with the second one, but make the amount -100.

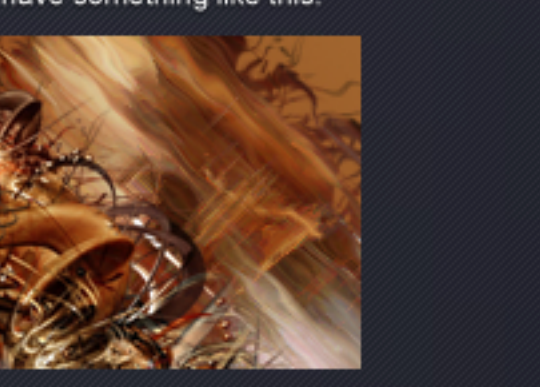
Now go back to the first one and **Filter>Brush Strokes>Spatter**. Make the Spray Radius 12 and the Smoothness 9. Then go to **Edit>Fade Spatter** (Fourth one down). And make the opacity 25%. Do the same for the second one. Unhide your main render to see how it looks. You should have something like this:



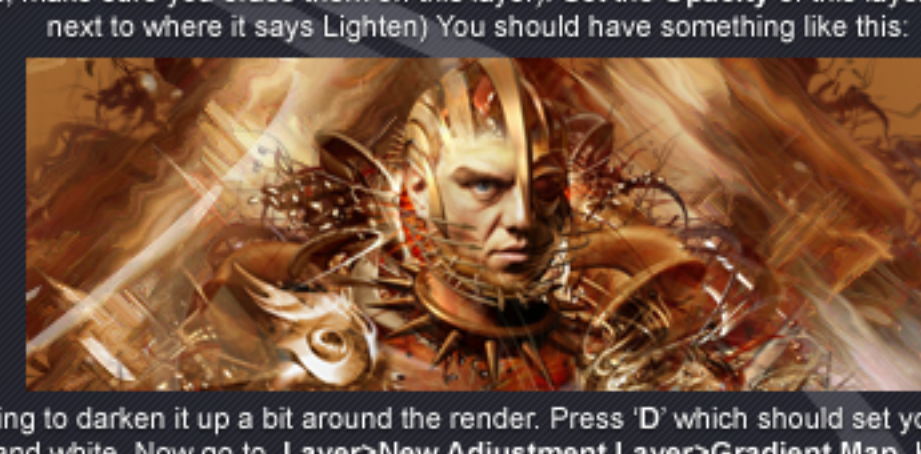
Ok, now make two more copies of your main render. Unhide the main one, and keep it on top. Click on the first duplicate and go to **Filter>Brush Strokes>Angled Strokes** use these settings:



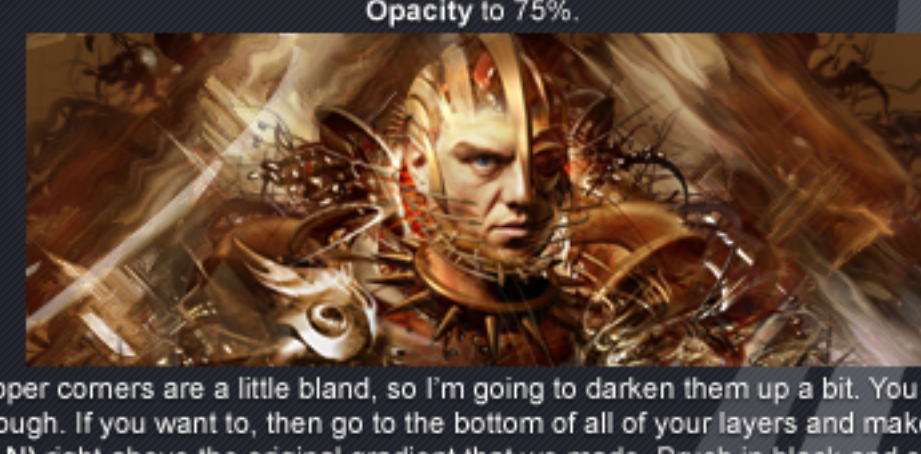
Set that layer to **Lighten**



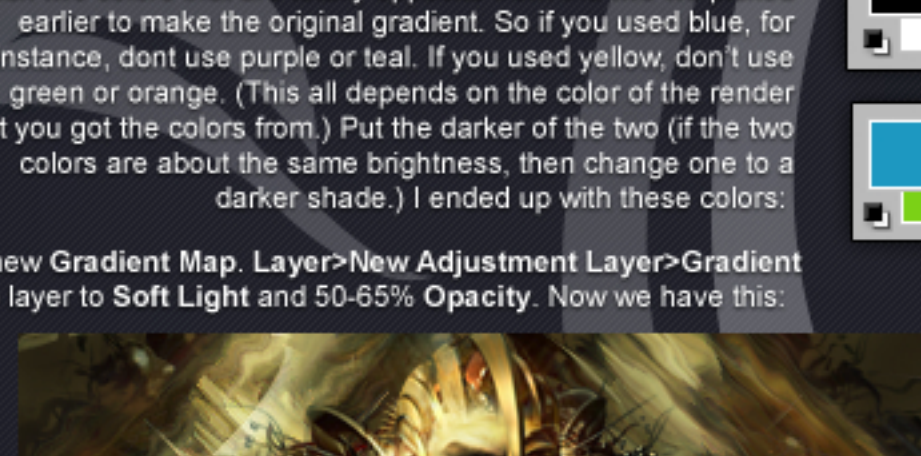
Do the same with the other layer. Position both around the render so it looks good. Hide/Unhide the main render to see if it looks good. You can erase parts of the two duplicates that are on the render if you need to. Now you should have something like this:



Now we're going to add a little more to the background and blend in the render a bit more. Go back to your original render(the one that was first opened when we began) Drag it onto the document like we did in the beginning, but this time don't resize it. Put it on top of the main render layer(unhide the main render if it is hidden) Set this to **Lighten** and move it around until u get something nice. Now erase the parts that are on top of the render, and parts that don't look right(if your render has a face or eyes, make sure you erase them on this layer). Set the **Opacity** of this layer to 50%. (right next to where it says **Lighten**) You should have something like this:



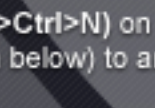
Now we are going to darken it up a bit around the render. Press 'D' which should set your colors back to default black and white. Now go to **Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Gradient Map**. Keep everything how it is. Set this layer to **Multiply**. Now take out your **Brush Tool (Shift-B)** use the same exact settings that we used when we were erasing around the render, but make sure you have the **Brush Tool** selected. (scroll up a bit to see the image above). Now with the **Gradient Map** layer selected, start clicking around the main render and around other parts that look too dark. (Even though you are technically brushing in black, it makes this certain layer lighter). Don't erase too much though. Set that layer's **Opacity** to 75%.



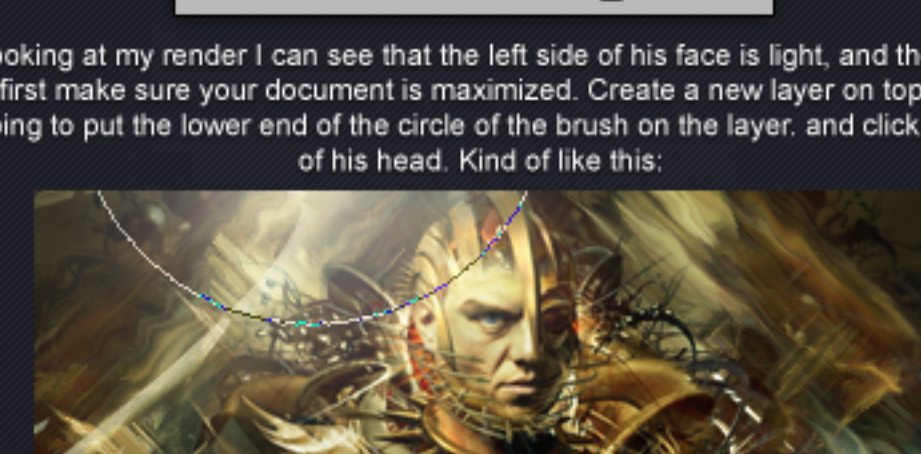
My two upper corners are a little bland, so I'm going to darken them up a bit. You don't have to do this though. If you want to, then go to the bottom of all of your layers and make a new layer (**Shift-Ctrl-N**) right above the original gradient that we made. Brush in black and set that layer to **Overlay** and 40-50% opacity.

Now we are going to take a break from creating the background and add some effects. Go to your color selector.

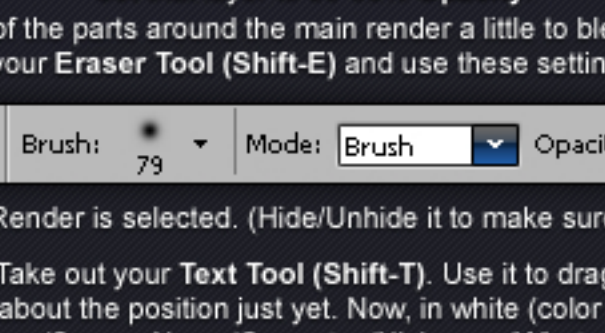
Pick two colors that are totally opposite from the two we picked earlier to make the original gradient. So if you used blue, for instance, don't use purple or teal. If you used yellow, don't use green or orange. (This all depends on the color of the render that you got the colors from.) Put the darker of the two (if the two colors are about the same brightness, then change one to a darker shade.) I ended up with these colors:



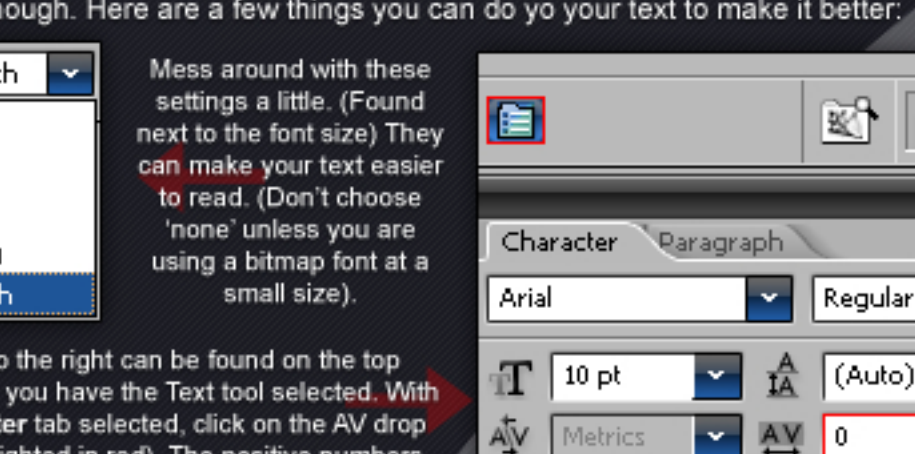
Now make a new **Gradient Map**. **Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Gradient Map**. Set the layer to **Soft Light** and 50-65% **Opacity**. Now we have this:



Now let's add a touch of lighting to the whole thing. Make a **New Layer (Shift-Ctrl-N)** on top of everything. Go to your **Brush Tool (Shift-B)**. Set the **Master Diameter** (shown below) to anything between 200-300 px.

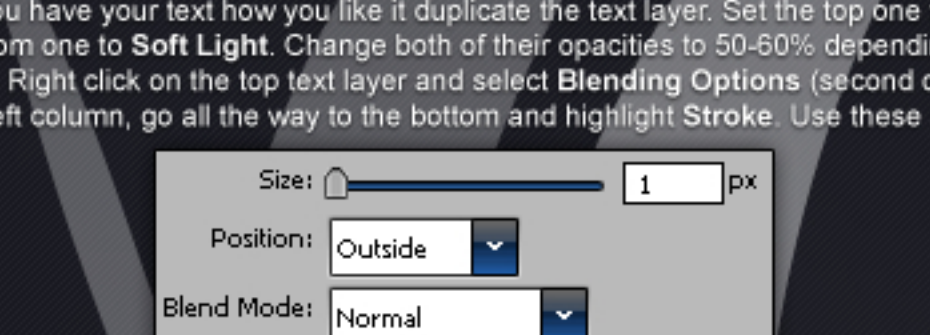


Now, by looking at my render I can see that the left side of his face is light, and the right side is darker. So, first make sure your document is maximized. Create a new layer on top. Now, with my brush I'm going to put the lower end of the circle of the brush on the layer, and click once to the left of his head. Kind of like this:



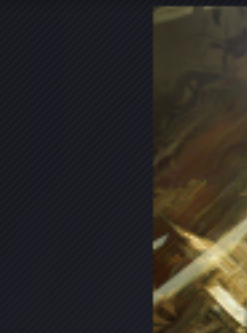
Set that layer to 50-60% **Opacity**.

I'm going to erase some of the parts around the main render a little to blend it in better. Just take out your **Eraser Tool (Shift-E)** and use these settings.

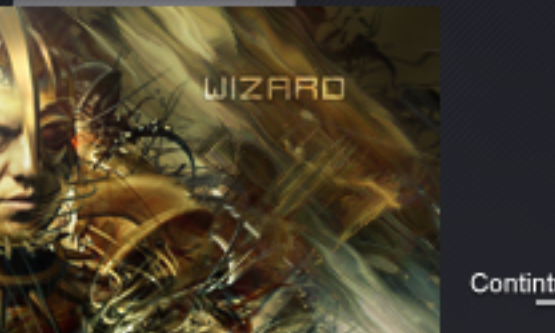


Make sure your Main Render is selected. (Hide/Unhide it to make sure you're on the right one).

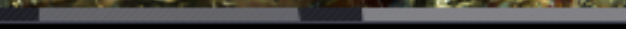
Now let's add some text. Take out the **Text Tool (Shift-T)**. Use it to drag a box on the document somewhere. Don't worry about the position just yet. Now, in white (color selection is up top) type whatever you want (Name/Screen Name/Gamertag/Nickname/Whatever). If you want some more fonts, www.dafont.com has some good ones. Now if you move your cursor outside the text box and drag, you can place the text wherever you want. Put it away from your light source though. Here are a few things you can do to your text to make it better:



Mess around with these settings a little. (Found next to the font size) They can make your text easier to read. (Don't choose 'none' unless you are using a bitmap font at a small size).



Ok, once you have your text how you like it duplicate the text layer. Set the top one to **Overlay**, and the bottom one to **Soft Light**. Change both of their opacities to 50-60% depending on one what looks best. Right click on the top text layer and select **Blending Options** (second one down). On the left column, go all the way to the bottom and highlight **Stroke**. Use these settings:



Continued...